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## ABSTRACT

A comprehensive, shop-related curriculum was developed for special needs students who are severely disabled readers. The basic approach of the curriculum was to provide individualized diagnostic-prescriptive materials that correlate basic reading skills and the required vocational and technical concepts. Trade-related packets were written for these areas: assembly work, baking, building maintenance, data entry, landscaping (mall design), and warehousing. Students' areas of deficiency were determined through administration of diagnostic tests. After analysis of data collected from testing, a plan of remediation was developed for each student. Students from the Employment Orientation classes participated in a field test of the curriculum. Students were surveyed by questionnaire as to whether they felt the curriculum helped them in basic and functional survival reading skills. Teachers were surveyed by questionnaire to determine their opinions of the curriculum's effectiveness. Student responses were overwhelmingly positive. The materials were well received by students, reading advisory committee members, teachers, and staff. (The student questionnaire is appended.) (YLB)

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FINAL REPORT  
OF  
PROJECT TRADE RELATED READING PACKETS  
FOR  
DISABLED READERS

1984-85

Gloucester County Vocational-Technical School  
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This project reported herein was conducted pursuant to a contract from the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education and Career Preparation. It was funded under Section 133 of Public Law 94-482.

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August 3, 1984

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PROJECT TITLE: Trade Related Reading Packets for Disabled ReadersLEGAL NAME OF APPLICANT  
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ABSTRACT

## DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

(Use this sheet and no more than one other to type in single-spaced form a statement of project objectives, procedures that were followed, state and local priorities emphasized and the expected contribution of the project to vocational education.)

Project "Trade Related Reading Packets for Disabled Readers " is a comprehensive, shop related curriculum for Special Needs students who are severely disabled readers. The materials are designed to increase their basic reading skill level to meet minimal reading requirements by providing them with practice in trade related reading tasks encountered in their vocational areas. It will also provide assistance in acquiring reading skills needed for the work world.

The curriculum will emphasize the attainment and development of specific trade and job related skills through the use of an individualized diagnostic - prescriptive approach.

It should be noted that this curriculum project is unique and the materials we have written are unavailable from publishers or other shared-time area vocational-technical schools in the State of New Jersey. This curriculum project will enhance and become the major thrust in the reading program for Special Needs students who are in need of intensive individualized instructional materials in reading.

Trade related packets have been created utilizing the expertise of the vocational teachers. Packets were written to cover the following areas:

Assembly Work  
Baking  
Building Maintenance  
Data Entry  
Landscaping (Mall Design)  
Warehousing

The impact of this curriculum is a tremendous stride towards equalizing the educational opportunities of all low achieving students attending a shared-time program at a vocational-technical school. Correlation of the basic skills to the vocational trade area is a necessity and is beyond the scope of the sending school teachers to be expected to have the expertise in the level of reading required for specific technical/vocational areas.

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## I. PROBLEM

To best meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged and handicapped students in Gloucester County, the Gloucester County Vocational-Technical School is enlarging their facility to include various new trade areas. The reading department is faced with the responsibility of developing a trade related curriculum for these students. This new curriculum will attempt to meet the particular needs of these handicapped students by reinforcing basic reading skills and offering practice in comprehension and word recognition skills through vocational or trade related materials. The emphasis for the need of trade related materials written for Special Needs or disadvantaged students is supported by a definite lack of these materials (on a low reading level) in the commercial market.

Gloucester County Vocational-Technical School is a shared-time facility, receiving students from thirteen (13) sending school districts. The concept of the shared-time system is that the vocational school provides the vocational/occupational training and sending district provides the required academic subjects the students needs for graduation.

The use of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test administered in September indicated that approximately forty percent of our total student body were disabled readers in need of individualized instructional materials in trade related reading skills. The extent of this problem is steadily increasing due to the high level of technical knowledge that is needed for the vocational/occupational courses.

## II. OBJECTIVES

- A. To develop reading activities in conjunction with essential vocational basics which are needed as a foundation for success in an occupational/trade area. This curriculum project will interrelate the expertise of reading specialist and instructors with the expertise of vocational/occupational instructors who are well aware of what is necessary for employment in their specific trade area through experience and the guidance of their Advisory Committee (who are involved in updating curriculum to meet the standards of employment).
- B. To provide materials that will upgrade the student's ability in basic skill areas which are a foundation for the vocational trade area and will be measured by pre and post-testing.
- C. To increase the students' capacity to meet the ever increasing demands of society by developing reading skills which will enable them to function effectively in job acquisition and job retention.
- D. To disseminate information to all of the sending school districts and to other shared-time vocational schools through instructional packets (for Special Needs or disadvantaged students) designed to be used by remedial reading instructors.

### III. RELATED RESEARCH

Attached is a synopsis of the following research areas used to substantiate the need for a reading program directly related to vocational education skills.

\* E.R.I.C. Materials Computer Search (and Educational Improvement Center, E.I.C. collected information).

Survey of Reading Skills Needed at Gloucester County Vocational-Technical School.

\*The emphasis for the need for materials in this area is effectively supported by the fact that the E.R.I.C. search and E.I.C. information turned up very little information which would directly correlate to the topics of "vocational education and basic reading skills". Descriptors were mixed and interchanged several ways.

Projects that looked relevant by just reading a description and title proved to be totally different from what was needed.

When their entire microfiche was read, The Design and Implementation of an Assessment Model for Students Entering Vocational Education Programs in the State of Colorado, University of Northern Colorado, seemed similar to my project but their worksheets did not have the same information that I needed to make the curriculum relevant to my students.

Therefore, related information synopsized will point out a positive correlation between remedial help and increased progress in school subjects.

"The Mismatch Between School Training and Job Literacy Demands", Larry Mikuleky, The Vocational Guidance Quarterly, December, 1981.

Poor reading skills are costing businesses millions of dollars. This study shows that workers face tougher reading demands on the job than in schools. Workers report a substantially larger amount of job related reading than student report school-related reading. The difficulty level of on the job reading was also cited as being much higher than school related reading. School personnel need to gather job related reading materials, and emphasize the importance of literacy on the job.

"Improving Vocabulary and Reading Skills", Edythe D. Conway, Voc. Ed., June, 1981.

Reading in vocational classes is a problem since the average vocational class hold a wide range of reading abilities. The problem is compounded when one realizes that the average vocational students ends his/her schooling after taking vocational classes so

that the skills they learn in school must last. The best strategy in teaching vocabulary to vocational students is to use a variety of materials and techniques, ones that interest the student. Using materials to meet the individual needs of the student is a key to success.

"Reading? A Part of Industrial Education? Definitely?", Vincent Walencik and Gloria Amatrudi, the Journal of Epsilon Pi Tau, Fall, 1979.

Reading and technical skills must be combined for a successful vocational education. Industrial education brings meaning and relevance to reading skills. Reading activities are needed in the shop environment, where there are many students who are poor readers. The technical terminology can sound like a foreign language to some students. Students facing this new vocabulary need word processing skills to function successfully on cognitive and psychomotor levels. Most vocational educators have pupils with reading disabilities. Reading must be incorporated as part of the vocational program, to improve the students' work efficiency through greater reading ability and comprehension.

"Basic Skills for Technicians", Robert A. Butler  
Technical Education News, Jan. - Feb. 1979.

By looking at the results of English instruction in recent years through the statistical data of several sources, Butler shows the need for a strong emphasis on basic English skills in the vocational-technical curriculum. He points out that the needs of a student graduating from high school in order to survive in the outside world have returned to basic, relevant topics such as study skills, business letters, research papers and employment forms and skills. Vo-tech students should not be excluded from this "back to basics" movement in education which research shows must be reinstated into everyone's basic curriculum.

"Turning Academic Educators on to Voc. Ed", Robert T. Tauber  
American Vocational Journal, March 1978.

Academic teachers from the sending schools of an area vocational-technical school did not realize the high level of academic ability needed for many of the vocational shop areas. In-service sessions were planned and carried out whereby these academic teachers visited the vo-tech school and participated in hands-on projects in the shop areas. Their comments following the activities were changed drastically. Many did not realize that the vocational students were required to understand such technical math and reading skills as were required by their shop. Others had underestimated the abilities of their students going to vocational school. Many suggested the need to develop materials which would apply the academics they were teaching to the vocational requirements of the shop classes.

"Let's Develop Survival Skills", Helene Schwarberg  
School Shop, September 1977.

Ms. Schwarberg points out the responsibility that the vocational system has in preparing students to enter the world of work. She feels that we prepare students to analyze a task and to choose the correct tools to complete it, but we fail to provide a student with the same "tools" for survival after graduation. Vocational education provides the job-entry skills as far as mechanical competency, but needs to explore the area of preparing students for jobs by training them to be competent, satisfied workers with proper work ethics and attitudes. Vocational education has a joint responsibility; to provide skills to achieve gainful employment and also the skills to deal with life and its ramifications.

Reading Related Teaching Competencies Identified for Florida  
Vocational Teachers, Florida State University, September, 1979.

The purpose of this study was to identify the reading-related teaching competencies that will be of potential use to vocational teachers if they are to develop the reading skills necessary for classroom instruction and job success. Questionnaires were sent to 591 teachers in all areas of vocational education. Questionnaire items were rated according to degree of importance as perceived by the vocational teachers for their particular program areas. Results revealed six tasks which were generic to all programs. Tasks included the following: (1) determine students strengths and weaknesses; (2) select teaching techniques that meet the instructional needs of individual students; (3) assign students to master specialized technical vocabulary related to course of instruction; (4) encourage students to use the correct definitions of words; (5) encourage students to interpret information, draw conclusions and predict outcomes when reading; and (6) assign students to read a sequence of events, methods or steps, or to follow written directions. Each individual program identified twelve to twenty-six competencies unique to their area.

"The Reading Teacher in the Vocational Classroom", Joyce Johnson  
Journal of Reading, Vol. 18, No. 1, October 1974.

The function of a vocational-technical school is to provide courses of study which encompass the current prerequisites for a job and provides students with the capability to continuously upgrade their skills in their competitive profession.

After a conference with a shop instructor, the reading teacher would determine specific reading skills required for the course. In this way, the reading teacher can devise teaching strategies which were directly related to the course content and demonstrate these strategies in the classroom. The shop teacher can continue to use these teaching strategies in future lessons. In this way

reading related instruction can be totally relevant to and emanate directly from the occupational area. Parallel strategies could be adopted for all vocations.

"Reading and Content in Technical-Vocational Education", John J. Carney and William Losinger, Journal of Reading, October 1976.

In this study the functional teaching of reading - study behaviors identified as being pertinent to an understanding of automotive mechanics theory did significantly increase students' ability to acquire concepts contained in an unfamiliar piece of technical material. There was also some indication of increased retention of such material over a sustained period of time.

The results of this study offers support for an instructional format in which reading behaviors and the concepts embodied in the subject matter are integrated. This format should be carried out in such a manner that reading skills inherent in the material and essential to its understanding are taught functionally through the content with the purpose of promoting the acquisition of the concepts.

#### SURVEY OF READING SKILLS NEEDED AT GLOUCESTER COUNTY VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL

From the statistics derived from the Gate-MacGinitie Reading Test, it was found that 40% of the student body at Gloucester County Vocational Technical School were reading below the "4" stanine, indicating a substantial deficiency.

Reading skills at the lower-level job entry may emphasize the literal interpretation of texts. In the vocational-occupational area, for example, such skills as understanding printed directions, following the steps in a sequence, learning a basic sight vocabulary of technical terms in a given vocation, finding the main idea, noting specific details, using the dictionary and other resource materials are essential.

The process skills of reading, that is, knowing how and where to find needed information, how to read it evaluatingly in terms of its pertinence to a particular need, how to organize this information so that it is manageable, logical, and easily retrievable, and how to retain those elements that are most essential - all these have far greater general utility than the content of any one subject.

A survey involving the shop teachers was conducted in regard to teachers' opinion on specific reading skills needed in the content area for their classrooms. The following are the basic reading and study skills which the teachers indicated were important for students to function efficiently in their respective shops.

1. Word-Recognition Skills

The student should:

- a. pronounce new words - divide word into syllables where necessary
- b. increase the number of words and technical terms to be recognized at sight.

2. Word-Meaning Skills

The student should:

- a. understand technical terms
- b. understand and use the glossary of a text or worksheet
- c. use typographical clues (e.g. - italics, subheadings, different colored type)
- d. use the dictionary effectively
- e. use new technical terms accurately
- f. understand that words have different meanings in different contexts.
- g. use context clues.

3. Comprehension Skills

The student should:

- a. recognize and understand main ideas
- b. select details related to main ideas
- c. recognize the relationship among main ideas
- d. organize ideas in sequence
- e. use new technical terms accurately
- f. understand that words have different meanings in different contexts
- g. use context clues

4. Study Skills

The student should:

- a. use textbooks and job sheets efficiently (e.g. - index, table of contents, appendix, glossary)
- b. interpret all graphic material correctly
- c. follow oral and written directions correctly
- d. prepare for examinations and evaluations in an organized efficient way.
- e. adjust rate of reading to suit purpose and content (e.g. - when to skim, when to read slowly and re-read etc.)

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#### IV. PROCEDURES USED

##### A. General Design

The basic approach of the curriculum is individualized materials which will correlate basic reading skills and the required vocational and technical concepts. The teacher using these materials is able to disseminate packets to the thirteen sending school districts. This would enable teachers to remediate many students at the home school.

Students were tested in September through the use of an diagnostic reading test. Once the needs of the students were identified, discussion with the classroom teachers occurred to familiarize them with the major areas of difficulty. Students were then scheduled into the program and used materials from the trade related packets that best fit their individual needs.

The primary objective of these curriculum packets is to remediate the reading deficiencies of the students so that when they enter their chosen trade area they will find a measure of success. The impact of this curriculum will be a tremendous stride towards equalizing the educational opportunities of all low achieving students attending the area vocational-technical school.

##### B. Management Plan

Development of Materials: Appropriate trade related teaching materials were designed to meet the specific needs of the students. This was done in coordination with the shop teachers and relied on the teacher's expertise as to what basic skills were needed for success in that particular vocational area. Materials will be individually in small group settings.

Testing: A diagnostic tests was administered to the students to determine areas of deficiency and to identify the students' preferred modality of learning.

Plan of Remediation: After analysis of data collected from testing, a plan of remediation was developed for each student, to aid in the acquisition of basic functional skills needed in the trade areas.

Conferences: During the process of remedial instruction, feedback and recommendations with the teachers and the Special Needs Coordinator concerning the students was continuous.

Dissemination of Materials: Dissemination of materials will be done through in-service, workshops and surveys of those who may use materials developed.

Evaluation: Evaluation of the curriculum was upon the completion of field testing time allowed for the students, and occurred in November, 1984.

C. Evaluation

1. Students involved were surveyed through the use of a questionnaire as to whether they felt the curriculum helped them in regards to basic and functional survival reading skills.
2. Questionnaires were given to the classroom teachers in an effort to determine their opinions of the curriculum's effectiveness. Suggestions for improving the curriculum will be requested for future use.

V. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Students from the Employment Orientation classes were randomly selected to field test the curriculum.

The students were given a questionnaire (see appendix) to evaluate the activities. Members of the Reading Advisory Committee, teachers and the Special Needs Coordinator were asked to evaluate the curriculum.

The materials were well-received by the students, advisory committee members, and staff. The student questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive.

It should be noted that this curriculum will not be used with the student body it is intended for, until September of 1985. However, the students who field tested the materials were very similar to the type of students who will be using our Trade Related Reading Packets during the 1985-86 school year.

VI. DISSEMINATION

At the local level, the final report and a copy of all materials developed will be presented to all staff at an in-service program. A copy of, or a reference to all of these materials, is housed in Gloucester County Vocational School's Media Center. These materials can be used and adapted by both the day school and adult education (evening school) teachers to correlate with their specific needs and shop/classroom areas.

County wide, information will be disseminated to sending schools through an in-service session at the vocational school. All Special Education and Reading teachers may attend and receive materials to help them correlate vocational basic skills in their classes at the home sending schools.

The new vocational curriculum has been made available to E.I.C. and the Northeast Network in order for all interested districts state-wide to be aware of these materials. Visitations could be made by interested parties to observe the curriculum.

## VII. SEX BIAS AND SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING

Students who are selected for the Reading Laboratory classes are chosen on the basis of need for remediation and the testing which would indicate this. Absolutely no sex bias has any bearing on the selection process. Materials that have been developed do not contain examples of sex-role stereotypings. Every effort has been made to develop material that exposes students to non-traditional jobs, such as, men who will become bakers, women who will become warehouse workers.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to assist low-achieving students in developing essential reading skills necessary for success at the vocational school and in their future employment, it is recommended that this curriculum be made available to other vocational teachers who work with handicapped students.

Additions to this curriculum should be written as new trade areas are added in the future.

(APPENDIX)

QUESTIONNAIRE ON TRADE RELATED READING PACKETS  
FOR DISABLED READERS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you think the activities are too hard, just right or too easy?  
Explain your answer.

2. Did the activities interest you?

3. Do you think the booklet will help students enrolled in those trade areas?

4. Comments, criticism, etc....